

Social Development



SD 4.1 Sexually Experienced Teens

Sexual experience and, particularly, age at first intercourse represent critical indicators of the risk of pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. Youth who begin having sex at a younger age are exposed to these risks over a longer period of time. Because sexual intercourse during the teen years, especially first intercourse, is often unplanned,⁶² it is also often unprotected by contraception.⁶³ In addition, research has shown that youth who have an early sexual experience are more likely at later ages to have more sexual partners and more frequent intercourse.⁶⁴

Trends over the past several decades show that increasing proportions of teens are sexually experienced—defined as ever having had sexual intercourse (see Figure SD 4.1). However, recent data show a decline between 1995 and 1997 in the percentage of teens who have ever had sexual intercourse (see Table SD 4.1.B).

Differences by Age. Age is the most important correlate of teen sexual experience. For the 1985 through 1987 cohort (cohorts are defined as those individuals who turned 20 in the specific time period presented), just under 1 in 10 13-year-old males and only 1 in 50 13-year-old females were sexually experienced by age 13. The proportion of teen females who were sexually experienced by age 15 increased from 3 percent for the 1958-1960 cohort to 11 percent for the 1990 to 1994 cohort. By age 20 for that same age cohort, three in four females were sexually experienced. And, for the 1985-1987 cohort, four in five males were sexually experienced by age 20 (see Table SD 4.1.A). By the late teen years, most teens are sexually experienced; however, it is important to note that not all teens are sexually experienced. Among the 1990-1994 cohort of females, 45 percent had not had intercourse by age 18. Among the 1985-1987 cohort of adolescent males, more than one-third had not had intercourse by age 18 (see Table SD 4.1.A). In addition, data from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, a survey of 9th- through 12th-grade students show that, for 9th-grade students in 1999, 39 percent reported having had sexual intercourse. This percentage rises with each grade, reaching 65 percent by the 12th grade (see Table SD 4.1.B).⁶⁵

Differences by Gender. More teen males than females reported having had intercourse by a given age. Data from the 1985-1987 cohort suggest that the proportion of teen males at each year of age who report having sex was roughly equal to the rate of sexually experienced teen females who are one year older (see Table SD 4.1.A).

⁶² Lowenstein, G., & Furstenberg, F.F. 1991. Is Teenage Sexual Behavior Rational? *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 21 (12): 957-986. Abma, J., Driscoll, A., & Moore, K. 1998. Young Women's Degree of Control over First Intercourse: An Exploratory Analysis. *Family Planning Perspectives* 30 (1): 12-18.

⁶³ Forrest, J.D., & Singh, S. 1990. The Sexual and Reproductive Behavior of American Women, 1982-1988. *Family Planning Perspectives* 22 (5): 206-214.

⁶⁴ Koyle, P., Jensen, L., Olsen, J., & Cundick, B. 1989. Comparison of Sexual Behaviors among Adolescents Having an Early, Middle, and Late First Intercourse Experience. *Youth and Society* 20 (4): 461-475.

⁶⁵ Direct comparison with other years is not possible, as grade in school does not accurately reflect age, and data from the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey include only teens in school.

Among female adolescents of all ages, the percentage who were sexually experienced has increased over time (see Table SD 4.1.A). For example, the percentage of 18-year-old females who were sexually experienced increased from 27 percent for the 1958-1960 cohort to 35 percent for the 1970-1972 cohort and to 52 percent for the 1985-1987 cohort. The proportion continued to increase to 55 percent for the 1990-1994 cohort. The percentage of male teens who were sexually experienced increased from 55 percent for the 1970-1972 cohort to 64 percent for the 1985-1987 cohort (see Table SD 4.1.A). Caution should be exercised in interpreting these differences, however, since the data for males and females come from different surveys.

Data for students from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey indicate that in 1999, males reported having had sex by the 9th grade at a rate 12 percentage points higher than females (45 versus 33 percent). By the 12th grade, females were as likely as males to report ever having sex (see Table SD 4.1.B). Additional survey research indicates that the percentage of teen males who have ever had sex has declined since 1988, while the use of contraception among teen males increased (1995 National Survey of Adolescent Males).⁶⁶ The 1995 National Survey of Family Growth found that 50 percent of women 15 through 19 years of age had ever had intercourse, the first decline ever recorded by the periodic survey.⁶⁷

Differences by Race.⁶⁸ Black students in grades 9 through 12 are more likely than white and Hispanic students to have had their first sexual experience while still in high school (see Table SD 4.1.B). Specifically, in 1999,

- 45 percent of both male and female white students reported having had sexual intercourse,
- 63 percent of Hispanic male students and 46 percent of Hispanic female students reported having had sexual intercourse, and
- 76 percent of black male students and 67 percent of black female students reported having had sexual intercourse.

⁶⁶ The Urban Institute. New Data on Sexual Behaviors of Teenage Males. Fact Sheet, May 1, 1997. Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute.

⁶⁷ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *HHS News*. Teen Sex Down, New Study Shows. Secretary Shalala Announces New Teen Pregnancy Prevention Grant Programs. Press release, May 1, 1997. Washington, D.C.: HHS, National Center for Health Statistics.

⁶⁸ Estimates for whites and blacks exclude Hispanics of those races.

Table SD 4.1.A

Percentage of youth in the United States who have ever had intercourse by each age, by gender: Cohorts^a age 20 in 1958-1960, 1970-1972, 1985-1987, and 1990-1994

Age at first intercourse	Females who turned age 20 in: ^b			
	1958-1960	1970-1972	1985-1987	1990-1994
13	1	0	2	—
14	2	1	5	—
15	3	4	10	11
16	8	9	21	—
17	16	20	36	—
18	27	35	52	55
19	46	53	66	—
20	61	68	76	75

Age at first intercourse	Males who turned age 20 in: ^b			
	1958-1960	1970-1972	1985-1987	1990-1994
13	—	11	9	—
14	—	15	13	—
15	—	20	27	—
16	—	30	41	—
17	—	41	52	—
18	—	55	64	—
19	—	67	75	—
20	—	74	80	—

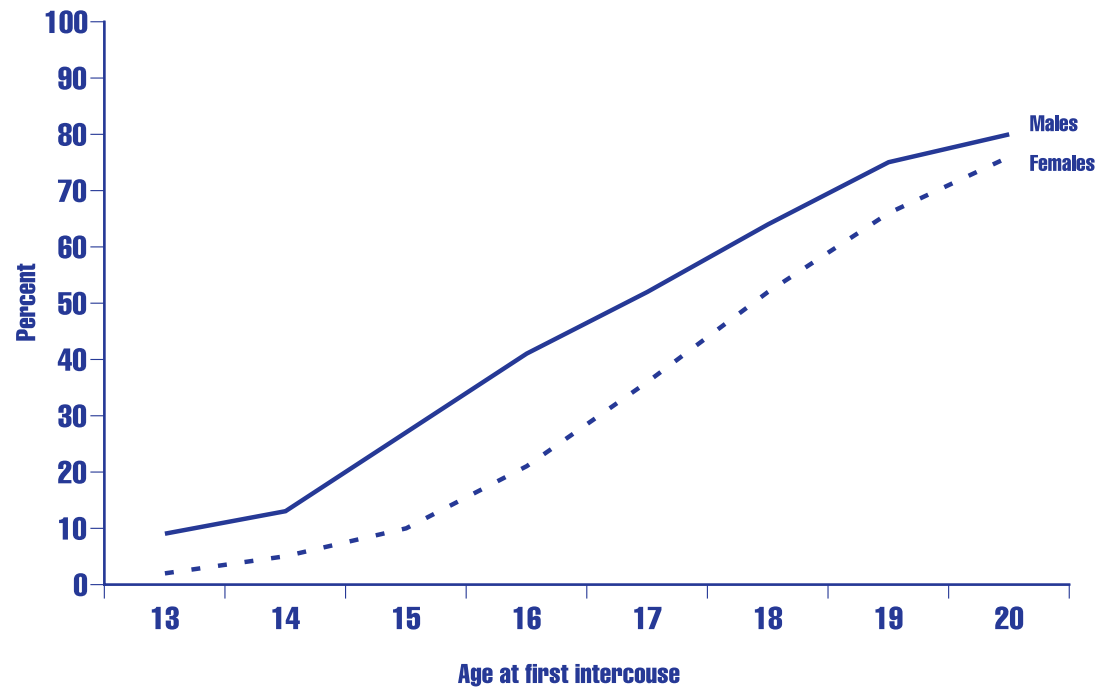
^a Cohorts are defined as those individuals who turned 20 years old within the specified time period.

^b Data are based on females ages 30-32 and 42-44 in the 1982 National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG), ages 21-23 and 36-38 in the 1988 NSFG, and ages 25-29 in the 1995 NSFG and males ages 21-23 and 36-38 in the 1991 Survey of Men.

Source: Alan Guttmacher Institute, 1994, Figures 11 and 12, pages 22-23; Abma, et al., 1997, Table 20.

Figure SD 4.1

Percentage of youth in the United States who have had intercourse, by age and gender: Cohort^a age 20 in 1985-1987



^a Cohorts are defined as those individuals who turned 20 years old within the specified time period.

Source: Alan Guttmacher Institute, 1994.

Table SD 4.1.B

Percentage of students grades 9 through 12 in the United States who reported ever having sexual intercourse, by gender, grade, and race and Hispanic origin: 1995, 1997, and 1999

	1995			1997			1999		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Total	53	54	52	48	49	48	50	52	48
Grade									
Ninth	37	41	32	38	42	34	39	45	33
Tenth	48	50	46	43	42	44	47	51	43
Eleventh	59	57	60	50	49	50	53	51	54
Twelfth	66	67	66	61	60	62	65	64	66
Race and Hispanic origin^a									
White	49	49	49	44	43	44	45	45	45
Black	73	81	67	73	80	66	71	76	67
Hispanic	58	62	53	52	58	46	54	63	46

^a Estimates for whites and blacks exclude Hispanics of those races. Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

Sources: Kann et al., 1998, Table 26; Kann et al., 1996, Table 26.

SD 4.2 Sexually Active Teens

Having become sexually experienced does not necessarily mean teenagers will be sexually active from that point on. They may still abstain from intercourse out of concern for the risk of pregnancy or sexually transmitted diseases or a preference for abstinence, or they may experience periods in which they do not have a sexual partner; nevertheless, research indicates that once a person has had sex, he or she is likely to continue to be sexually active. Among young adults ages 18 through 22 who had ever had intercourse, over 70 percent had a second experience of intercourse within 6 months of first intercourse.⁶⁹

The percentage of teens in grades 9 through 12 who are sexually active—defined as having had sexual intercourse in the previous 3 months—has remained steady, with little variation, from 1991 to 1996 (see Table SD 4.2).

Differences by Gender. There is no difference between the percentages of male and female students who are sexually active. In 1999, 36 percent of males and 36 percent of females reported being sexually active.

Differences by Race and Hispanic Origin.⁷⁰ In 1999, black students were, at 53 percent, more likely than either white (33 percent) or Hispanic (36 percent) students to be sexually active (see Figure SD 4.2).

Differences by Grade. The percentage of teens who are sexually active rises as grade increases. Twelfth-grade students are nearly twice as likely to be sexually active as are 9th-grade students (see Table SD 4.2).

⁶⁹ Moore, K.A., & Peterson, J.L. August 1989. *The Consequences of Teenage Pregnancy*. Final Report to NICHD and ASPE/HHS, Grant No. HD 21537.

⁷⁰ Estimates for whites and blacks exclude Hispanics of those races.

Table SD 4.2

Percentage of students grades 9 through 12 in the United States who reported having had sexual intercourse in the previous 3 months, by gender, race and Hispanic origin, grade, and age: 1991, 1993, 1995, 1997, and 1999

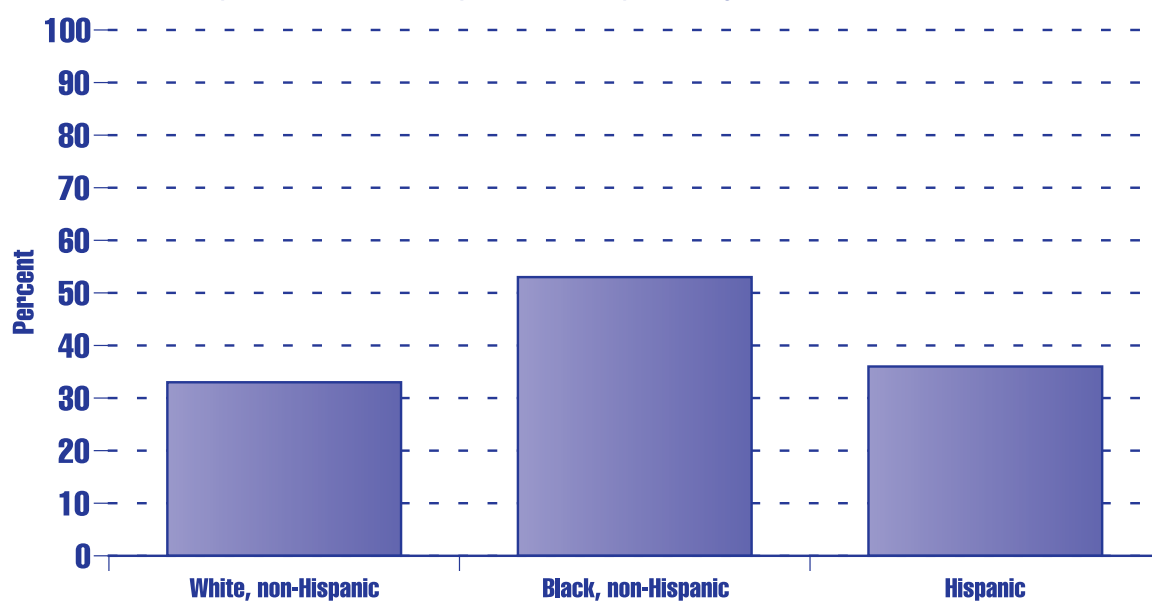
	1991	1993	1995	1997	1999
Total	38	38	38	35	36
Gender					
Male	37	38	36	33	36
Female	38	38	40	37	36
Race and Hispanic origin^a					
White	34	34	35	32	33
Black	59	59	54	54	53
Hispanic	37	39	39	35	36
Grade					
Ninth	22	25	24	24	27
Tenth	33	30	34	29	33
Eleventh	43	40	42	38	38
Twelfth	51	53	50	46	51
Age					
15	24	25	28	26	27
16	38	35	37	32	35
15 or 16	31	31	32	29	32

^a Estimates for whites and blacks exclude Hispanics of those races. Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

Sources: Data for 1991: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 1990-1991 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, Table 1, p. 78; data for 1993: Kann, et al., 1995. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report 44 (SS-1): Table 20; data for 1995: Kann, et al., 1996, Table 26; data for 1997: Kann, et al., 1998, Table 26; and unpublished data from the Centers for Disease Control.

Figure SD 4.2

Percentage of youth in grades 9 through 12 in the United States who reported having had sexual intercourse in the previous 3 months, by race and Hispanic origin:^a 1999



^a Estimates for whites and blacks exclude Hispanics of those races. Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

Source: Kann, et al., 1998, Table 26.

SD 4.3 Contraceptive Use by Teens

Sexual intercourse without contraception puts a teen at risk of unintended pregnancy and of contracting sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS. The vast majority of teens do not want to become pregnant. Data from a national survey show that among teens who had first intercourse at age 17 or younger, fewer than 1 in 100 wanted a pregnancy to occur at that time. This was true for both males and females and for both blacks and whites.⁷¹ Even among adolescents who give birth as a teenager, only 34 percent of the births are intended.⁷²

Condoms and birth control pills are the most common forms of contraception used by sexually active teenagers.⁷³ In 1999, over half (58 percent) of sexually experienced students in grades 9 through 12 reported use of a condom during their last sexual intercourse, while only 16 percent reported use of the birth control pill (see Tables SD 4.3.A and SD 4.3.B).

Condom use among sexually experienced students increased between 1991 and 1999 from 46 percent to 58 percent (see Table SD 4.3.A). Use of birth control pills has remained relatively steady from 1993 to 1999 at 16 to 18 percent, with some subgroup differences that are discussed below (see Table SD 4.3.B).

Differences by Gender. Female students are less likely than male students to report having used a condom during their last intercourse (51 percent of females versus 66 percent of males in 1999).

Differences by Grade. Condom use among 12th-grade students is lower than among students in the earlier grades. The decrease is largest among young women, dropping from 50 percent to 41 percent between the 11th and 12th grades for 1999. In contrast, in 1999, only 12 percent of sexually experienced 9th graders reported use of the pill, while 25 percent of 12th graders reported its use (see Figure SD 4.3).

Differences by Race.⁷⁴ Black students report the highest use of condoms, while white students report the highest use of the pill. In 1999, white students were more likely to have used the pill during their last sexual intercourse (21 percent) than were either black students (8 percent) or Hispanic students (8 percent) (see Tables SD 4.3.A and SD 4.3.B).

It is important to note that the data presented here include only those teens who are in school. Teens out of school are likely to have lower rates of contraceptive use because their access to education regarding the risks associated with unprotected sex, as well as guidance on how to obtain protection, is more limited.

⁷¹ Moore & Peterson, August 1989. See also preliminary results of research from the 1995 National Survey of Adolescent Males and the 1995 National Survey of Family Growth, The Urban Institute Fact Sheet (May 1, 1997), New Data on Sexual Behaviors of Teenage Males.

⁷² In the 1995 National Survey of Family Growth, the percentage of births intended at the time of conception to women ages 15 through 44 that occurred 5 years prior to the survey interview were as follows: 69 percent to all mothers, 34 percent to mothers under 20, 61 percent to mothers ages 20 through 24, 78 percent to mothers ages 25 through 29, and 80 percent to mothers ages 30 through 44. Abma, J.C., Chandra, A., Mosher, W.D., Peterson, L., & Piccinino, L. 1997. Fertility, Family Planning, and Women's Health: New Data from the 1995 National Survey of Family Growth. National Center for Health Statistics, *Vital Health Statistics* 23 (19), Table 14.

⁷³ Peterson, L.S., 1995, Contraceptive Use in the United States: 1982-90. *Advance Data*, No. 260, Division of Vital Statistics, National Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Data from the National Survey of Family Growth.

⁷⁴ Estimates for whites and blacks exclude Hispanics of those races.

Table SD 4.3.A

Percentage of currently sexually active^a high school students in the United States who reported using a condom during last sexual intercourse, by gender, grade, and race and Hispanic origin: 1991, 1993, 1995, 1997, and 1999

	1991			1993			1995			1997			1999		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Total	46	55	38	53	59	46	54	61	49	57	63	51	58	66	51
Grade															
Ninth	53	56	50	62	63	59	63	66	59	59	59	58	67	70	63
Tenth	46	57	36	55	63	46	60	68	52	59	65	53	63	70	55
Eleventh	49	57	41	55	65	46	52	57	49	60	65	55	59	69	50
Twelfth	41	51	33	47	52	41	50	57	43	52	61	43	48	56	41
Race and Hispanic origin^b															
White	47	55	38	52	59	46	53	58	48	56	62	49	55	63	48
Black	48	57	39	57	64	48	66	72	61	64	68	59	70	75	65
Hispanic	37	47	27	46	55	37	44	56	33	48	55	40	55	66	43

^a “Currently sexually active” is defined as having had sexual intercourse during the 3 months preceding the survey.

^b Estimates for whites and blacks exclude Hispanics of those races. Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

Sources: Data for 1990: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1990-1991 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, Table 2, p. 47; data for 1993: Kann, et al., 1995, Table 20; data for 1995: Kann, et al., 1996, Table 28; also, unpublished tabulations from L. Kann, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; data for 1997: Kann, 1998, Table 28.

Table SD 4.3.B

Percentage of currently sexually active^a high school students in the United States who reported birth control pill use during last sexual intercourse, by gender, grade, and race and Hispanic origin: 1993, 1995, 1997, and 1999

	1993			1995			1997			1999		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Total	18	15	22	17	14	20	17	13	21	16	12	20
Grade												
Ninth	9	8	11	11	10	13	8	8	8	12	11	13
Tenth	14	10	17	12	9	16	12	8	17	9	6	13
Eleventh	17	12	22	15	13	17	16	12	19	15	12	18
Twelfth	26	23	29	25	21	29	24	19	30	25	17	31
Race and Hispanic origin^b												
White	20	17	24	21	17	25	21	17	25	21	16	26
Black	15	11	21	10	8	12	12	9	15	8	3	12
Hispanic	12	10	15	11	14	9	10	7	13	8	5	11

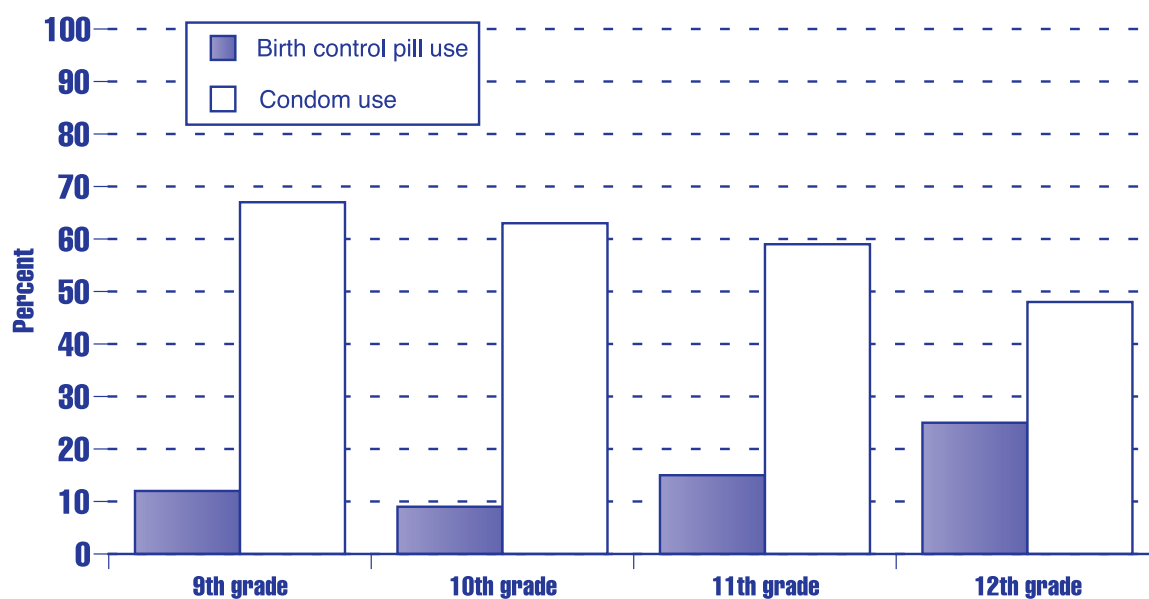
^a “Currently sexually active” is defined as having had sexual intercourse during the 3 months preceding the survey.

^b Estimates for whites and blacks exclude Hispanics of those races. Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

Sources: Data for 1993: Kann, et al., 1995, Table 20; data for 1995: Kann, et al., 1996, Table 28; data for 1997: Kann, et al., 1998, Table 28.

Figure SD 4.3

Percentage of currently sexually active^a high school students in the United States who reported using a contraceptive during their last sexual intercourse, by grade and method: 1999



^a "Currently sexually active" is defined as having had sexual intercourse during the 3 months preceding the survey.

Source: Kann et al., 1998, Table 28.

SD 4.4 Number of Sexual Partners

The greater the number of sexual partners a person has, the greater the risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS. While trend data on the sexual behavior of teens are limited, one study indicates that the proportion of sexually active females living in metropolitan areas who have had six or more sexual partners doubled from 1971 to 1988.⁷⁵

Differences by Gender. Male youth generally report a higher number of sexual partners than do female youth. In 1995, 6 percent of sexually active males and 3 percent of sexually active females ages 15 through 19 reported having five or more sexual partners in a year. The number of sexual partners per year among sexually active females is concentrated at the lower end of the scale, with either zero or one partners most likely to be reported (see Table SD 4.4.A). Among high school students surveyed in 1999, 19 percent of males reported having had four or more sexual partners in their lifetime, compared with 13 percent of female students (see Table SD 4.4.B).

Differences by Race.⁷⁶ Black high school students are more likely to report having had four or more sexual partners in their lifetime than their white or Hispanic peers: 34 percent versus 12 and 16 percent, respectively, in 1999 (see Table SD 4.4.B).

Differences by Age at First Intercourse. Age at first intercourse has a strong association with the number of sexual partners a person has over a lifetime (see Table SD 4.4.C). Among teens who were age 20 in 1992, 74 percent of males who had sexual intercourse at age 14 or younger had six or more partners during their lifetime, compared with 48 percent of those who initiated sex at age 15 or 16, and 10 percent of those who did not have intercourse until age 17 or older. A similar pattern exists for females (see Figure SD 4.4).

⁷⁵ Kost, K., Forrest, J.D. 1992. American Women's Sexual Behavior and Exposure to Risk of Sexually Transmitted Disease. *Family Planning Perspectives* 24 (6): 244-254. Based on data from the National Surveys of Young Women (1971, 1976, and 1979) and the 1988 National Survey of Family Growth.

⁷⁶ Estimates for whites and blacks exclude Hispanics of those races.

Table SD 4.4.A

Percentage distribution of number of sexual partners in a year among sexually active teens ages 15 through 19 in the United States, by gender: 1995

	0 Partners	1 Partner	2 Partners	3-4 Partners	5 or more Partners
Males	10	44	26	14	6
Females	8	62	17	10	3

Source: Analyses of the 1995 National Survey of Family Growth, Cycle 5, by Child Trends; also Sonenstein, et al., 1997, pp. 16 and 17.

Table SD 4.4.B

Percentage of students in grades 9 through 12 in the United States who reported having four or more sex partners during lifetime, by gender, grade, and race and Hispanic origin: 1993, 1995, 1997, and 1999

	1993			1995			1997			1999		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Total	19	22	15	18	21	14	16	18	14	16	19	13
Grade												
Ninth	11	15	6	13	18	7	12	16	8	12	16	8
Tenth	16	19	13	16	20	11	14	16	12	16	21	10
Eleventh	20	23	16	19	21	17	17	17	16	17	19	15
Twelfth	27	31	23	23	25	21	21	21	21	21	21	21
Race and Hispanic origin^a												
White	14	15	13	14	15	13	12	11	12	12	12	13
Black	43	59	27	36	52	22	39	53	25	34	48	21
Hispanic	19	26	11	18	24	12	16	20	10	17	23	11

^a Estimates for whites and blacks exclude Hispanics of those races. Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

Sources: Data for 1993: Kann, et al., 1995, Table 20; data for 1995: Kann, et al., 1996, Table 26; data for 1997: Kann, et al., 1998, Table 26.

Table SD 4.4.C

Percentage distribution of number of lifetime sexual partners among sexually active 20-year-olds by age at first intercourse and by gender: 1992

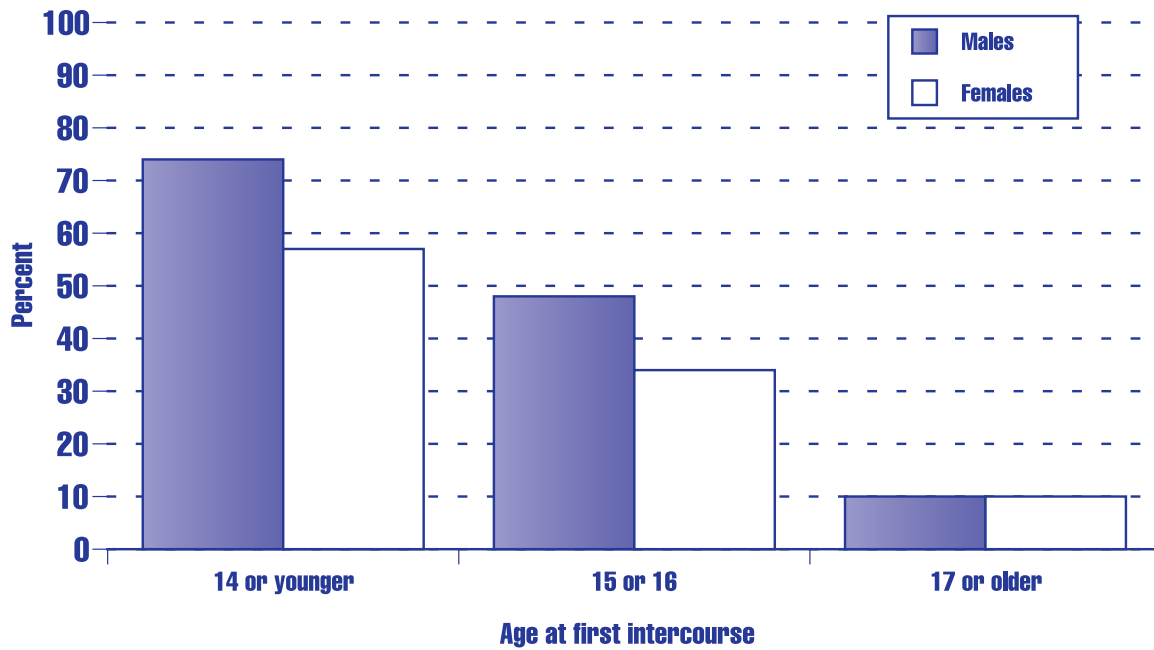
	First intercourse at age 14 or Younger	First intercourse at age 15 or 16	First intercourse at age 17 or older
Males			
1 partner	2	9	42
2 or 3 partners	10	27	30
4 or 5 partners	15	16	19
6 or more partners	74	48	10
Females			
1 partner	2	10	45
2 or 3 partners	26	28	33
4 or 5 partners	16	28	13
6 or more partners	57	34	10

Note: Percents may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Source: National Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *1992 National Health Interview Survey—Youth Risk Behavior Supplement*. Tabulations by Child Trends.

Figure SD 4.4

Percentage of sexually active 20-year-olds in the United States with six or more lifetime sexual partners, by age at first intercourse: 1992



Source: National Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *1992 National Health Interview Survey—Youth Risk Behavior Supplement*. Tabulations by Child Trends.

SD 4.5 Teen Pregnancy and Abortion

The United States has the highest teen pregnancy, birth, and legal abortion rates among western nations. The teen pregnancy rate in the United States is twice as high as that in England, Wales, and Canada; three times as high as that in Sweden; and seven times as high as that in the Netherlands.⁷⁷ The Society for Adolescent Medicine cites a multitude of factors, including the lack of sex education, inadequate access to reliable contraception, poverty, and substance abuse, as some of the reasons for the U.S.'s high teen pregnancy, birth, and abortion rates.

Pregnancy

Teenage pregnancy rates⁷⁸ have declined considerably in the 1990s. The overall pregnancy rate was 98.7 per 1,000 women ages 15-19 years in 1996, down 15 percent from its high point of 116.5 in 1991 (See Table SD 4.5). Among the factors accounting for the overall decrease in teenage pregnancy rates are 1) a decrease in sexual activity, 2) increased condom use, and 3) the adoption of Depo-Provera and Norplant contraception methods.⁷⁹ Furthermore, societal influences may have also combined to reduce the pregnancy rate among teens. One is changing attitudes towards premarital sex. Many public and private initiatives have focused attention on the importance of pregnancy prevention through abstinence. Furthermore, the long economic expansion of the 1990s has increased the economic opportunities for teenagers. The sexual activity of teens is closely associated with simple measures of economic prosperity. As a result of the economic boom, teenagers' educational and occupational goals may have changed during the 1990s, with more value placed on school completion and entering the work force.⁸⁰

Differences by Age. Pregnancy is more prevalent among older teens. For teenagers ages 15 to 17 years, the pregnancy rate was 67.8 in 1996, while the pregnancy rate for older teens (18 or 19 years) was more than twice that, at 146.4 (See Table SD 4.5.A). This gap has been apparent throughout the 1990s. This trend reflects the fact that older teens are more sexually active than younger ones. In 1995, over two-thirds of teens ages 18 to 19 years had been sexually active in the last 12 months, compared to approximately one-third of all teenagers ages 15 to 17.⁸¹

Differences by Race and Hispanic Origin. The pregnancy rates for non-Hispanic black and Hispanic teenagers are about twice as high as the rate for non-Hispanic white teenagers. The lower rate for non-Hispanic white teenagers is due to both the smaller proportion of sexually active teens and lower pregnancy rates for those who are sexually active. In 1996 non-Hispanic black and Hispanic teens ages 15-19 were more than twice as likely as non-Hispanic whites to become pregnant (rates of 177.8 and 157.1, respectively versus 68.1). (See Table SD 4.5.A).

⁷⁷ Singh & Darroch. 2000. Adolescent Pregnancy and Childbearing: Levels and Trends in Developed Countries. *Family Planning Perspectives* 32 (1): 14-23. Society for Adolescent Medicine. Position Paper on Reproductive Health Care for Adolescents. *Journal of Adolescent Health*: 1991 12:649-661.

⁷⁸ Pregnancy rates are based on the sum of live births, induced abortions, and fetal losses.

⁷⁹ Ventura, Mosher, Curtin, Abma, & Henshaw. 2000. Trends in Pregnancies and Pregnancy Rates by Outcome: Estimates for the United States, 1976-96. *Vital and Health Statistics* 21(56) Hyattsville MD.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

Abortion

The proportion of females ages 15 through 19 who obtained an abortion during the previous year increased from 2.3 percent to 4.4 percent between 1973 and 1985, presumably influenced both by the legalization of abortion and increasing levels of sexual activity and pregnancy (see Section SD 4.2 and Table SD 4.5.B). By 1992, the proportion obtaining abortions had dropped to 3.6 percent, and it continued to decline, reaching 2.9 percent in 1996 (the most recent year for which data are available). Similar patterns occurred among both younger teens (ages 15 through 17) and older teens (ages 18 or 19).

There has not been a steady trend in the propensity of pregnant teens to give birth versus obtain an abortion over the past 20 years (see Figure SD 4.5.C). In 1972, the proportion of pregnancies (excluding miscarriages) to females ages 15 through 19 that ended in birth was 76 percent. During the rest of the 1970s, this proportion declined as abortion increased. Throughout most of the 1980s, however, the proportion of teen pregnancies ending in birth remained fairly stable at around 48 percent. By 1995, there was an increase to 55 percent in the proportion of teen pregnancies ending in birth, indicating a trend toward fewer abortions among pregnant teens.

Differences by Age. Older teens ages 18 or 19 have higher abortion rates than younger teens ages 15 through 17. In 1996, 1.9 percent of younger teens and 4.5 percent of older teens obtained an abortion (see Table SD 4.5.B).

Differences by Race and Hispanic Origin.⁸² Non-Hispanic black teens are more likely to have had an abortion than are their non-Hispanic white and Hispanic peers. Among non-Hispanic black females ages 15 through 19, 6.6 percent obtained an abortion in 1995, compared with 1.9 percent of non-Hispanic white and 3.9 percent of Hispanic females (see Table SD 4.5.C).

Sexually Experienced Teens. The percentage of teens who are sexually experienced has increased during the past several decades; therefore, it is reasonable to consider abortion in light of this trend. When abortion rates are calculated among females ages 15 through 19 who have ever had intercourse, the data indicate that the proportion obtaining abortions increased from 5.9 percent in 1973 to 9.1 percent in 1980, then declined to 6.8 percent in 1991 (see Table SD 4.5.B). Although a larger proportion of teen females were sexually experienced in 1990 than in 1980 (see Section SD 4.2), a smaller proportion of these sexually experienced teens obtained abortions.

⁸² Estimates for whites and blacks exclude Hispanics of those races.

Table SD 4.5.A

Rate of females ages 15 through 19 experiencing pregnancy by age and by race and Hispanic origin: 1990-1996

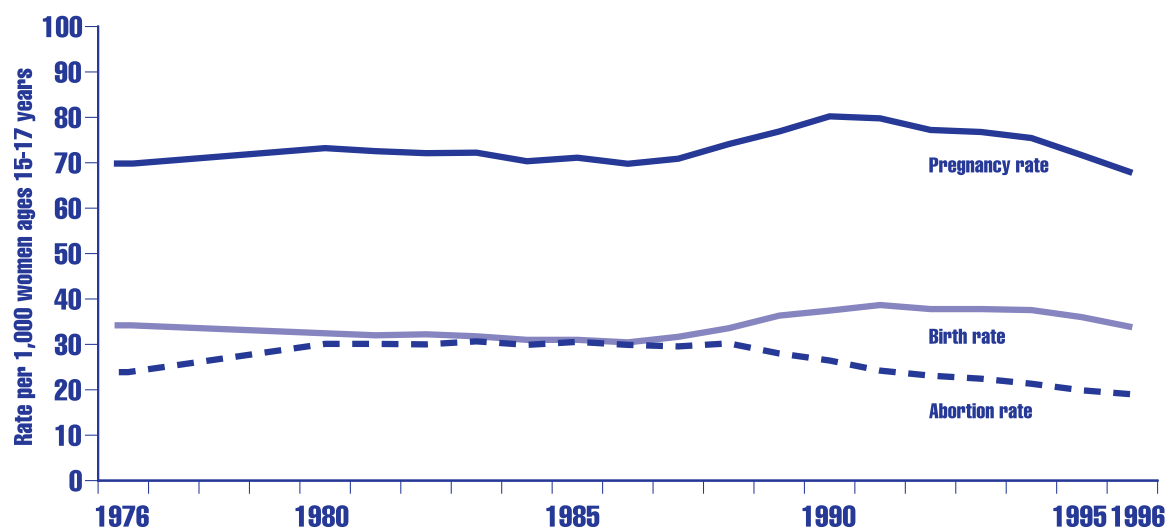
	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Females 15-19 years							
Total	116.3	116.5	112.8	110.4	107.6	102.7	98.7
Race and Hispanic origin ^a							
White	87.4	84.7	79.3	76.9	74.5	71.6	68.1
Black	221.3	221.7	217.3	211.7	201.2	184.4	177.8
Hispanic	155.8	164.6	167.8	166.1	167.2	162.8	157.1
Females 15-17 years							
Total	80.3	79.8	77.3	76.8	75.5	71.7	67.8
Race and Hispanic origin ^a							
White	56.3	54.1	50.4	49.9	48.7	46.7	43.9
Black	165.0	164.6	160.4	158.0	149.8	137.0	128.1
Hispanic	101.0	107.0	110.9	110.2	113.9	110.0	105.0
Females 18 or 19 years							
Total	162.4	167.2	165.1	160.6	156.7	150.8	146.4
Race and Hispanic origin ^a							
White	126.4	126.9	121.8	117.3	114.0	110.2	105.6
Black	295.3	299.8	300.5	292.4	280.9	258.3	254.4
Hispanic	231.4	247.6	251.6	249.3	246.5	242.7	235.4

^a Estimates for whites and blacks exclude Hispanics of those races. Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

Sources: Ventura, et al., 2000, *Vital and Health Statistics Series 21*, Tables 3-5.

Figure SD 4.5.A

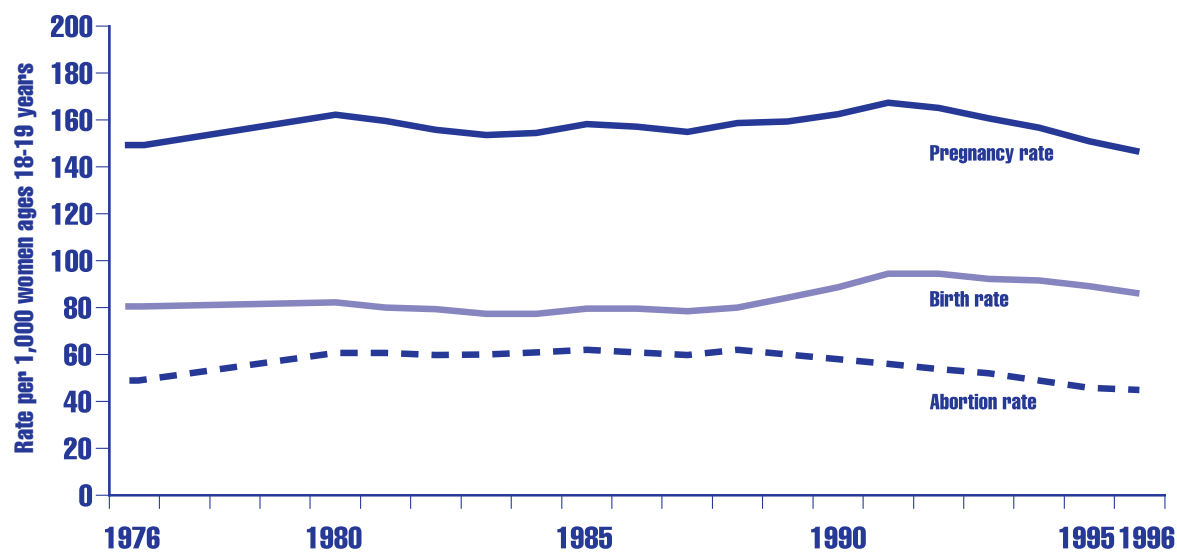
Pregnancy, birth, and abortion rates for teenagers 15-17 years: 1976-1996



Source: Ventura, et al., 1999, *National Vital Statistics Reports* 47, Table 2.

Figure SD 4.5.B

Pregnancy, birth, and abortion rates for teenagers 18-19 years: 1976-1996



Source: Ventura, et al., 1999, *National Vital Statistics Reports* 47, Table 2.

Table SD 4.5.B

Percentage of females ages 15 through 19 in the United States obtaining an abortion during the year, by age and by race and Hispanic origin: 1990-1996

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Females ages 15-17							
Total	2.7	2.4	2.3	2.3	2.1	2.0	1.9
Race and Hispanic origin ^a							
White, non-Hispanic	2.1	1.8	1.6	1.5	1.4	1.3	1.3
Black, non-Hispanic	5.8	5.5	5.4	5.4	5.0	4.6	4.4
Hispanic	2.4	2.5	2.8	2.7	2.8	2.5	2.5
Females ages 18 or 19							
Total	5.8	5.6	5.4	5.2	4.9	4.6	4.5
Race and Hispanic origin ^a							
White, non-Hispanic	4.7	4.3	3.9	3.7	3.3	3.1	2.9
Black, non-Hispanic	11.7	11.6	11.7	11.5	10.8	9.8	10.0
Hispanic	6.0	6.3	6.6	6.4	6.3	5.9	6.0
Females ages 15-19							
Total	4.0	3.8	3.6	3.4	3.2	3.0	2.9
Race and Hispanic origin ^a							
White, non-Hispanic	3.2	2.8	2.5	2.4	2.2	2.0	1.9
Black, non-Hispanic	8.4	8.1	8.0	7.8	7.3	6.6	6.6
Hispanic	3.9	4.0	4.3	4.2	4.2	3.9	3.9

^a Estimates for whites and blacks exclude Hispanics of those races. Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

Sources: Ventura, et al., 2000.

Table SD 4.5.C

Percentage of females under age 20 in the United States obtaining an abortion, by all females and sexually experienced females: Selected years, 1973-1996

	1973	1975	1980	1985	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
All females ages 14 or younger ^a	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.9	0.8	0.7	0.8	—	—	—	—
All females ages 15-17	1.9	2.4	3.0	3.1	2.7	2.4	2.3	2.3	2.1	2.0	1.9
All females ages 18 or 19	2.9	4.2	6.1	6.2	5.8	5.6	5.4	5.2	4.9	4.6	4.5
All females ages 15-19	2.3	3.1	4.3	4.4	4.0	3.8	3.6	3.4	3.2	3.0	2.9
Sexually experienced females ages 15-19 ^b	5.9	7.5	9.1	8.5	7.3	6.8	—	—	—	—	—

^a Denominator is 14-year-old females.

^b Data for sexually experienced females for 1985 were interpolated from 1980 and 1988 data. Data for sexually experienced females are not available for 1992-1995. Data for females ages 14 or younger are not available for 1993-1995.

Sources: Henshaw, 1998; Alan Guttmacher Institute, Table 2; Alan Guttmacher Institute. 1994, Figure 36. Both are based on data from abortion providers and sexual experience data from the National Survey of Family Growth; also, unpublished data from Ventura, Mosher, and Henshaw, National Center for Health Statistics and published and unpublished data from the Alan Guttmacher Institute.

SD 4.6 Teen Births

Research indicates that giving birth as a teen can have negative consequences on both mothers and their children. Giving birth at an early age can limit a young woman's options regarding education and employment opportunities, increases the likelihood that she will need public assistance, and can have negative effects on the development of her children.⁸³

Between 1960 and 1985, birth rates for teens ages 15 through 19 dropped from 89.1 to 51.0 per 1,000 teen women. This trend reversed between 1986 and 1991, and the teen birth rate increased to 62.1 per 1,000 teen women. Since 1991, the teen birth rate has again turned downward, declining to 49.6 births per 1,000 teen women by 1999, a record low for the U.S. (see Figure SD 4.6).

Differences by Race and Hispanic Origin.⁸⁴ The trends described in the previous paragraph are evident for white, black, and American Indian/Alaska Native⁸⁵ women ages 15 through 19.

The birth rate for black teens has remained about twice that of white teens since 1960. In 1999, the birth rate for white teens was 34.1 per 1,000 teen women, and for black teens it was 81.1 per 1,000 teen women. Black teens had the highest birth rate until 1994, when the rate for Hispanic teens surpassed that of blacks; the Hispanic rate has remained at a higher level through 1999. Black teens experienced a 30 percent drop in birth rates between 1991 and 1999, from 115.5 to 81.1 per 1,000 women ages 15 through 19. The birth rate for black teens is now at its lowest point in the more than 30 years for which detailed statistics for black teens have been available (see Table SD 4.6).

Differences by Age. Teen birth rates increase with age. In 1999, the birth rate for all teens ages 15 through 17 was 28.7 per 1,000 teen women; for those ages 18 or 19, it was 80.2 per 1,000. Rates for teen females ages 10 through 14 were considerably lower at 0.9 per 1,000. For black and Hispanic teens, the birth rate among 18- and 19-year-olds was more than twice that of the 15- through 17-year-old teen females. The birth rate of white, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Asian/Pacific Islander teen females ages 18 or 19 are over two and a half times that of younger teens ages 15 through 17.

⁸³ Moore, K.A. 1993. *Teenage Childbearing: A Pragmatic Perspective*. Washington, D.C.: Child Trends, Inc.; Maynard, R.A. (ed.). 1996. *Kids Having Kids: A Robin Hood Foundation Special Report on the Costs of Adolescent Childbearing*. New York: The Robin Hood Foundation.

⁸⁴ Estimates for white and black teens do not include those of Hispanic origin in the text. Teens of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

⁸⁵ Data for American Indians/Alaska Natives available since 1980.

Table SD 4.6

Teen birth rates in the United States by age of mother and by race and Hispanic origin (births per 1,000 females in each age group)
Selected years: 1960-1999

	1960	1965	1970	1975	1980 ^a	1985	1990	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
All races												
Ages 10-14	—	—	1.2	1.3	1.1	1.2	1.4	1.3	1.2	1.1	1.0	0.9
Ages 15-17	43.9	36.6	38.8	36.1	32.5	31.0	37.5	36.0	33.8	32.1	30.4	28.7
Ages 18 or 19	166.7	124.5	114.7	85.0	82.1	79.6	88.6	89.1	86.0	83.6	82.0	80.2
Ages 15-19	89.1	70.5	68.3	55.6	53.0	51.0	59.9	56.8	54.4	52.3	51.1	49.6
White^b												
Ages 10-14	—	—	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.6
Ages 15-17	35.5	27.8	29.2	28.0	25.5	24.4	29.5	30.0	28.4	27.1	25.9	24.8
Ages 18 or 19	154.6	111.9	101.5	74.0	73.2	70.4	78.0	81.2	78.4	75.9	74.6	73.4
Ages 15-19	79.4	60.6	57.4	46.4	45.4	43.3	50.8	50.1	48.1	46.3	45.4	44.5
White, non-Hispanic												
Ages 10-14	—	—	—	—	0.4	—	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.3
Ages 15-17	—	—	—	—	22.4	—	23.2	22.0	20.6	19.4	18.4	17.1
Ages 18 or 19	—	—	—	—	67.7	—	66.6	66.1	63.7	61.9	60.6	59.0
Ages 15-19	—	—	—	—	41.2	—	42.5	39.3	37.6	36.0	35.2	34.1
Black^b												
Ages 10-14	—	—	5.2	5.1	4.3	4.5	4.9	4.2	3.6	3.3	2.9	2.6
Ages 15-17	—	99.3	101.4	85.6	72.5	69.3	82.3	69.7	64.7	60.8	56.8	52.1
Ages 18 or 19	—	227.6	204.9	152.4	135.1	132.4	152.9	137.1	132.5	130.1	126.9	122.9
Ages 15-19	156.1	144.6	140.7	111.8	97.8	95.4	112.8	96.1	91.4	88.2	85.4	81.1
Hispanic^{c,d}												
Ages 10-14	—	—	—	—	1.7	—	2.4	2.7	2.6	2.3	2.1	2.0
Ages 15-17	—	—	—	—	52.1	—	65.9	72.9	69.0	66.3	62.3	61.2
Ages 18 or 19	—	—	—	—	126.9	—	147.7	157.9	151.1	144.3	140.1	139.0
Ages 15-19	—	—	—	—	82.2	—	100.3	106.7	101.8	97.4	93.6	93.1
American Indian/Alaska Native^b												
Ages 10-14	—	—	—	—	1.9	1.7	1.6	1.8	1.7	1.7	1.6	1.7
Ages 15-17	—	—	—	—	51.5	47.7	48.5	47.8	46.4	45.3	44.4	41.3
Ages 18 or 19	—	—	—	—	129.5	124.1	129.3	130.7	122.3	117.6	118.4	110.4
Ages 15-19	—	—	—	—	82.2	79.2	81.1	78.0	73.9	71.8	72.1	67.7
Asian/Pacific Islander^b												
Ages 10-14	—	—	—	—	0.3	0.4	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.4
Ages 15-17	—	—	—	—	12.0	12.5	16.0	15.4	14.9	14.3	13.8	12.6
Ages 18 or 19	—	—	—	—	46.2	40.8	40.2	43.4	40.4	39.3	38.3	38.8
Ages 15-19	—	—	—	—	26.2	23.8	26.4	26.1	24.6	23.7	23.1	22.8

^a Beginning in 1980, births have been tabulated by race and ethnicity of the mother. Prior to 1980, births were tabulated by race of child, assigning a child to the race of the nonwhite parent, if any, or to the race of the father, if both are nonwhite.

^b Includes persons of Hispanic origin.

^c Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

^d Data for Hispanics have been available only since 1980, with 22 states reporting in 1980, representing 90 percent of the Hispanic population. Hispanic birth data were reported by 23 states and the District of Columbia in 1985; 48 states and the District of Columbia in 1990; 49 states and the District of Columbia in 1991 and 1992; and all 50 states and the District of Columbia since 1993. Rates in 1985 were not calculated for Hispanics because estimates for populations were not available.

Sources: Curtin & Martin. 2000. Births. Ventura, et al., 1999, Births, Tables 4 and 9; Ventura, Mathews, & Curtin, 1998, Births, Tables 1 and 2; Ventura, et al., 1998, Table 4; Centers for Disease Control, National Center for Health Statistics. Vital Statistics of the United States, Volume 1, Natality. Annual Issues, Table: Birth Rates by Age of Mother and Race and Hispanic Origin: United States, 1940-97; and Mathews, et al., 1998, Table 1.

SD 4.7 Second- and Higher-Order Births to Teens

Bearing a child during adolescence is associated with poor outcomes for young women and their children.⁸⁶ Giving birth to a second child while still a teen further increases these risks.⁸⁷ Yet, analyses of nationally representative data indicate that in the 2 years following the first birth, teen mothers have a second birth at about the same rate as older mothers.⁸⁸

In 1999, more than one in every five births to teen mothers was a birth of second order or higher. The proportion of teen births that were second or higher order increased from 22 percent in 1980 to peak at 25 percent in 1991 but has since declined to 22 percent in 1999. This pattern is evident across racial, ethnic, and marital status groups (see Table SD 4.9). The rate of second births to teens who have had a first birth fell 21 percent between 1991 and 1996 and has changed little since (data not shown).⁸⁹

The increased use of contraceptives by teenage mothers may account for this drop in second births. Teenage mothers are increasingly using Depo-Provera and Norplant implants as their primary method of birth control. These contraceptives last longer and are more reliable than birth control pills or condoms, whose effectiveness is contingent upon proper and consistent use. In fact, one in four teenagers who already have a child used one of these two longer-lasting methods, compared to 5 percent of teenage females without children.⁹⁰

Differences by Race and Hispanic Origin. Births to black and Hispanic teens are more likely to be subsequent births than births to white teens. In 1999, 26 percent of births to black teens, 23 percent of births to Hispanic teens, and 18 percent of births to non-Hispanic white teens were second- or higher-order births.

Differences by Marital Status. A higher proportion of births among married teens are second or higher order than births to unmarried teens. In 1998, 29 percent of births to married teens were second or higher order, compared with 20 percent among unmarried teens.

⁸⁶ Moore, K.A., Myers, D.E., Morrison, D.R., Nord, C.W., Brown, B.V., & Edmonston, B. 1993. Age at First Childbirth and Later Poverty. *Journal of Research on Adolescence* 3 (4): 393-422; Maynard, 1996.

⁸⁷ Kalmuss, D., & Namerow, P.B. 1992. The Mediators of Educational Attainment among Early Childbearers. Unpublished manuscript. Columbia University, Center for Population and Family Health.

⁸⁸ Moore, K.A., Morrison, D.R., Nord, C.W., & Blumenthal, C. 1993. The Consequences of Early Childbearing in the 1980s. Unpublished tables. Washington, D.C.: Child Trends.

⁸⁹ Ventura, S.J., Martin, J.A., Curtin, S.C., Park, M.M., & Mathews, T.J. "Births: Final Data for 1998" National Vital Statistics Report 48 (3). Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics.

⁹⁰ Ventura, Mosher, Curtin, Abma, & Henshaw. 2000. "Trends in Pregnancies and Pregnancy Rates by Outcome: Estimates for the United States 1976-1996". Vital and Health Statistics Series 21 (56). Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics.

Table SD 4.7

Percentage of all births to women under age 20 in the United States that are second or higher order, by marital status and by race and Hispanic origin of mother: Selected years, 1980-1999

	1980	1985	1991 ^a	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
All births	22	23	25	22	21	21	22	22	22
Race and Hispanic origin									
White ^a	19	20	19	17	17	17	18	18	18
Black ^a	27	28	33	28	27	27	27	27	26
Hispanic ^b	20	25	25	23	23	24	24	24	23
Marital status									
Married	24	26	28	26	26	27	28	29	—
Single	19	20	23	20	19	20	20	20	—

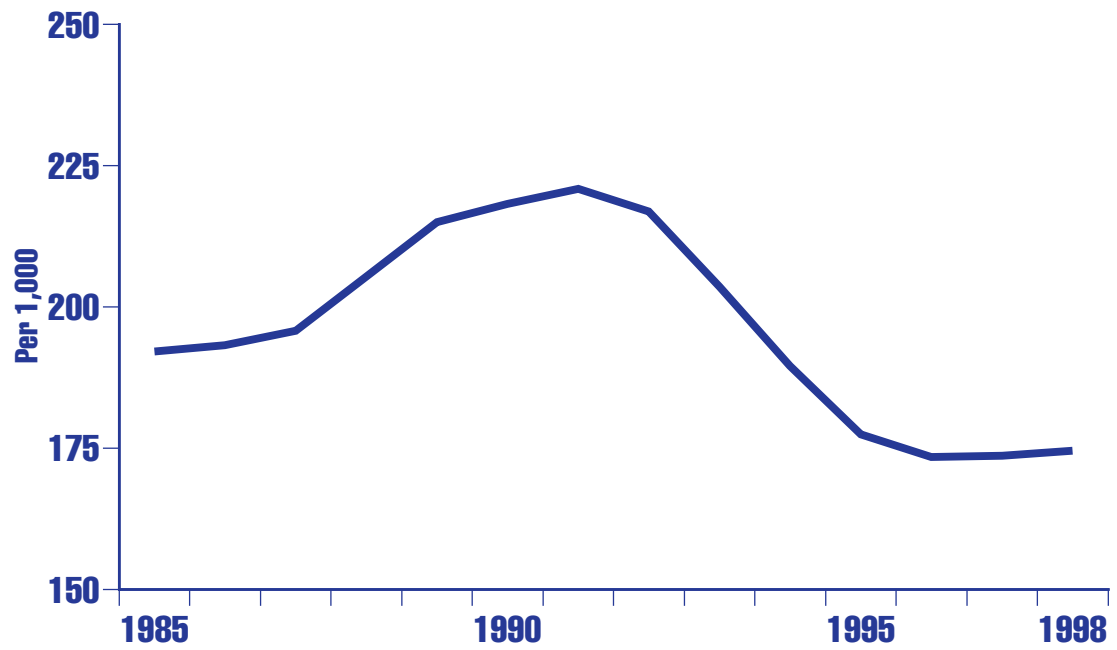
^a Includes persons of Hispanic origin before 1990. Beginning 1990 persons of Hispanic origin are not included; figures for black women for 1999 include Hispanic women.

^b Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

Sources: Ventura, et al., 2000. Births: Final Data for 1998. Curtin & Martin. 2000. Births: Preliminary Data for 1999. Ventura, et al., 1999, Births Tables 2 and 7; Ventura, et al., 1998, Natality 1996, Tables 2 and 7; also previous issues of this annual report (vol. 45, no. 11, supp., tables 2 and 6; vol. 44, no. 11, supp., tables 2 and 6; vol. 42, no. 3, supp.; vol. 36, no. 4, supp.; vol. 31, no. 8, supp., table 2 in each); also unpublished tabulations, Division of Vital Statistics, National Center for Health Statistics.

Figure SD 4.7

Rate of second births to teenagers who have had a first birth, 1985-1998



Sources: Ventura, et al., 2000; *Vital and Health Statistics 21*, Table A.